

ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN ATHEIST?

Titus 1:16

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Titus – Week 5

The title of this sermon is “Are You a Christian Atheist?” What is a Christian atheist? The term sounds like an oxymoron, like jumbo shrimp, or Microsoft Works, or deafening silence. An atheist is a person who does not believe in God. A Christian is a person who believes in Jesus Christ as God, Lord, and Savior. So how is it possible to be a Christian atheist?

Turn with me to **Titus 1:16**. Remember that the first chapter of Titus is all about pastors (church leaders). Paul is writing to Titus to appoint pastors in every church on the island of Crete, and then he says that one of the jobs of the pastor is to refute, and silence, and rebuke false teachers. And then he says this about false teachers in **verse 16**.

They claim to know God, but they deny him by their works.

This is the definition of a Christian atheist. Christian atheists are people who claim to know God, but deny Him by their works. It is a person who claims to be a Christian, but they don't live like it; they claim to be a Christian, but live as if God does not even exist.

And I'm said to say that there are a lot of Christian atheists in this part of the country. There are a lot of people in this part of the country who claim to be Christians, but they don't live like it. They live as if God does not exist; as if God is not watching; as if they won't have to face judgment; as if there is no heaven and hell; as if God can't kill them or punish them at any moment; they live as if Jesus did not die on the cross and rise again; they live as if the Bible isn't true.

And that's a problem. When Christians don't act like Christians, God isn't glorified, Christianity gets a bad name, and Christians don't get to enjoy all the blessings of the Christian life. God isn't glorified, because the way to glorify God is to show what He is like through your behavior. But if you aren't acting like a real Christian, then you surely aren't glorifying God. As well, Christianity will get a bad name, because you aren't accurately displaying what Christianity is all about. You are guilty of false advertising. People will reject Christ because of you, even though you aren't actually representing Christ. And when you don't act like a Christian you will miss out on the blessings of the Christian life – joy, peace, power, purpose, freedom, and on and on. The blessings of the Christian life aren't for people who call themselves Christians; they are for people who act like Christians.

So how can we make sure that we are not living like Christian atheists? Today I'm going to give you 9 marks of Christian atheists. Christian atheists are characterized by one or more of the following.

Before we get started, let me ask you a question. What if one of these behaviors or marks of a Christian atheist describes you? What if you fit the description of a Christian atheist, of someone who claims to be a Christian, but lives like God does not exist? You have two options. You can repent. Or you can remain in your sin. I encourage you to repent. I encourage you to obey the words of Peter in **Acts 3:19-20**. "19 Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out, 20 that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Jesus, who has been appointed for you as the Messiah."

So here we go. **Christian atheists are...**

1. Disobedient to Scripture.

At perhaps the most basic level, a Christian is a person who reads the Bible and does what it says. Jesus said in **John 14:15**, "If you love me, you will keep my commands." **1 John 5:3** says, "For this is what love for God is: to keep his commands." **James 1:22** says, "But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." **1 John 2:3-4** says, "3 This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commands. 4 The one who says, 'I have come to know him,' and yet doesn't keep his commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." The Bible says that Jesus Christ is Lord. Do you know what that means? It means Jesus is both God and Master; He is in charge; He is the boss; He is the CEO. A Christian is one who lets Jesus be in charge. A Christian is obedient to Scripture.

But a Christian atheist is disobedient to Scripture. They act like God isn't watching; like they aren't accountable to God. They are knowingly disobedient to Scripture. They do all sorts of things that the Bible prohibits. They get drunk or high, or both; they lust after people they aren't married to; they look at pornography; they commit adultery; they have premarital sex; they lie about their taxes; they cheat on tests; they steal from their job.

In other words, a Christian atheist lives like they are in charge. They live like they are the boss. They are sitting on the throne of their own heart. And they do whatever they want.

If you are disobedient to Scripture, then you aren't living like a Christian. You are a Christian atheist.

Christian atheists are also...

2. Uncommitted to church.

It talk a lot about the importance of the church, because that has been forgotten in our generation. The church is the body of Christ; the bride of Christ; the pillar and foundation of the truth; it is the family of God; it is the temple of God. The Bible says that Christ loves the church, died for the church, is building the church, and feeds and cares for the church. So how can you claim to be a follower/imitator of Jesus if you are uncommitted to the church? A Christian is one who committed to and participating in a local church? They tithe, they volunteer, they attend every week (unless something crazy comes up), they love and serve their fellow members. That's supposed to be the normal Christian life. **Hebrews 10:24-25** says, "24 And let us watch out for one another to provoke love and good works, 25 not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching."

But the Christian atheist is uncommitted to the church. They act like the church isn't the body and bride of Christ. They act like it's not important to God. Sometimes they claim they don't have the time. Sometimes they claim that there are no good churches. Sometimes they claim that the church is just full of hypocrites. There are plenty of excuses.

And there are different levels to this. Sometimes Christian atheists only show up on Christmas and Easter. Sometimes they attend about once a month, but they don't move to the center. They stay out on the fringe. They don't volunteers. They don't give. They don't build relationships. They are just uncommitted.

But if you are not committed to the church, then you aren't living like a Christian. You are a Christian atheist.

Christian atheists are also

3. Prayerless.

Prayer is a central part of the Christian life. In **Matthew 6:5** Jesus said, "Whenever you pray," not "if you pray." **Matthew 18:1** says, "Now he told them a parable on the need for them to pray always and not give up." **Philippians 4:6** says, "Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." **1 Thessalonians 5:17** says, "Pray constantly." **Romans 12:12** says, "Be persistent in prayer."

Why do we pray? Prayer is talking to God. You can't praise God without prayer. You can't thank God without prayer. You can't sing to God without prayer. You can't ask for God's help without prayer. We pray simply because prayer is the way God blesses us. James 4:2 makes it clear that if you don't ask God for it, you won't get it.

But a Christian atheist is for the most part prayerless. They live as if there is no God to talk to; as if God does not listen to or answer our prayers. They live without prayer. They don't wake up early to have a quiet time of prayer with God. They don't pray at meals, unless people are watching. And when other people are praying, they simply bow their heads and let their mind wander. The only time Christian atheists pray is when they go through a hard time.

But if you live a mostly prayerless life, then you are a Christian atheist. You are not living like a Christian.

Christian atheists are also...

4. Joyless.

Christians are called to be joyful. Joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. That means that as a Christian, the indwelling Holy Spirit is giving you the power to be joyful in all circumstances. And that's God's will for us. Three times in Philippians we are called to rejoice – to walk through life with a celebratory, enthusiastic, cheerful attitude and countenance.

Philippians 3:1 says, "In addition, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord." And **Philippians 4:4** says, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"

But a Christian atheist is joyless. They live like they don't have the Holy Spirit. They live as if the only way they can be happy is if their circumstances are going the way they want them to. The Christian atheist walks around with a gloomy, sad, negative, depressed, melancholy, sad attitude and countenance. Don't get me wrong. There is a time for everything. There is a time to weep; there is a time to mourn. But a Christian atheist's regular, normal attitude and countenance is sad, negative, depressed, gloomy, and melancholy.

If joy is not your normal demeanor, your normal attitude and countenance, then you are not living like a Christian. You are a Christian atheist.

Christian atheists are also...

5. Dismissive of God's Word.

Christians believe that the Bible is God's word. That's what it claims about itself in **2 Timothy 3:16**. "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness." The word "inspired" means God-breathed. It means that the Bible came from the very breath of God; it is God's word. And if the Bible is God's word, and God does not lie, then we must believe and obey the Bible. The Bible is our authority. We don't get to choose which parts of the Bible we want to accept, and which we want to

reject. If the Bible is God's Word, then we must accept it all. And that's the way a Christian views Scripture. I believe what it says. I obey what it says.

But a Christian atheist is dismissive of God's word. They act like the Bible is just a man-made book that they can either take or leave. In other words, they take clear teachings of the Bible, and if they don't like them, they just don't believe them. The Bible says that people are created and not evolved; they don't believe that. The Bible says that there are only two genders; they don't believe that. The Bible says that homosexuality is sinful and marriage is only the union of one man and one woman; they don't believe that. The Bible says that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven; they don't believe that. The Bible says that hell is real and is a place of eternal torment for those who reject Christ; they don't believe that. The Bible says that wives must submit to their husbands, and parents should spank their children; they don't believe that. In other words, Christian atheists treat the Bible like a buffet. They just accept the parts that they like; and they reject or dismiss the parts that they don't like. The Bible is not the authority; they are their own authority.

But if you are dismissive of God's word, then you are not living like a Christian. You are a Christian atheist.

Christian atheists are also...

6. Confused about the ownership of their money.

The Bible is clear that when it comes to our money, God owns it all. **Psalm 24:1** says, "The earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants, belong to the Lord." **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** says, "19 Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body." Notice that it says "you are not your own." As a Christian, you belong to God. And all you have belongs to God. And so a Christian understands that everything I have belongs to God, and I'm just His money-manager. I spend it in a way that honors Him. And I live with an open-hand, so that whenever God wants His money, I am ready to hand it over.

But a Christian atheist is confused about this. They are confused about the ownership of their money. They act like God doesn't exist; like they are the owners of their money. When it comes to tithing, or giving the first 10% of your finances to God, they don't do that. They earn way more than they need, but they don't use that extra to contribute to God's causes; they spend it on themselves. And when they get a raise, they don't look to increase their giving; they increase their standard of living.

But if you are at all confused about the ownership of your money, then you are not living like a Christian. You are a Christian atheist.

Christian atheists are also...

7. Foul with their language.

Christians are careful to please and glorify God with their language; their speech. **Ephesians 4:29** says, “No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear.” **Ephesians 5:4** says, “Obscene and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but rather giving thanks.” **Philippians 2:14** says, “Do everything without grumbling and arguing.” **Colossians 3:8** says, “But now, put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth.”

But the Christian atheist is foul with their language. They act like God isn't listening. They use dirty words; they tell nasty jokes; they insult and cut people down; they criticize and gossip about people behind their backs.

But if you are foul with your language, then you are not living like a Christian. You are a Christian atheist.

Christian atheists are also...

8. Weak when suffering.

Christians have endurance. **Romans 12:12** says, “Be patient in affliction.” The Greek word for be patient, or endure, is *hypomeno* (Phonetic Pronunciation: hoop-om-en'-o). It means to stay under. In other words, it means to stay faithful under trials. To remain Christ-like when you are suffering. And that's what Christians do. When they go through hard times, they stay faithful; they stay Christ-like; they stay close to God; they remain on mission for God.

But Christian atheists are weak when suffering. When they go through times of difficulty, it's like they forget God exists, or they change their beliefs about God. They get depressed; they get mad at God; they try to comfort themselves with sin; they get mean; they try to relieve their pain but stealing, or lying, or cheating; they abandon their responsibilities; they stop going to church.

But if you are weak when suffering; then you are not living like a Christian; you are a Christian atheist.

Christian atheists are also...

9. Lacking in heart-purity.

To be pure is to be morally clean. It is to be without sin. And Christians do not merely seek to be pure in their outward, visible actions; they seek to be pure in their thoughts, and in private, when nobody is looking. That's what it means to be pure in heart. Jesus said in **Matthew 5:8**, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." True Christians strive for purity not just on the outside, but on the inside; not just when people are watching, but even when they are alone.

But Christian atheists only attempt to be pure in their visible actions. It's as if they don't believe that God is always watching. They aren't trying to be pure to please God; they are trying to be pure to impress and please and be accepted by people. But in their thoughts, and in private, they tolerate all sorts of evil. They lack heart-purity, and they don't seek it.

But if you lack heart-purity, then you aren't living like a true Christian. You are a Christian atheist.

CONCLUSION

So what is a Christian atheist? **Titus 1:6** says, "They claim to know God, but they deny him by their works." It is a person who claims to know Christ, but denies Christ by their lifestyle. They claim to be a Christian, but they don't live like it.

So how are you doing when it comes to this topic? Are you a Christian atheist? Do one or more of these marks describe you? If so, thank God for revealing your sin to you, and take the time to repent right now.

But maybe you are not a Christian. Maybe you are not truly saved and born again. Have you ever made the decision to invite Jesus into your life? He wants to come into your life, to forgive your sins, and to make you into a new person. But you must receive Him. You must accept Him. You must call out to Him and ask Him to come into your life to save you.

The Bible teaches that we are all sinners, and that the punishment for sin is hell forever. But that's the reason Jesus died; He was punished in our place, for our sins, and He rose again. And the Bible says that if we will believe in Jesus and invite Him into our lives to be our Savior and King, He will forgive us, and give us eternal life, and change us.

Let's bow our heads. If you are not 100% sure that you are saved, would you raise your hand? If you want to invite Jesus into your life, pray this prayer. "Jesus, I know I am a sinner, and I want to turn from my sins and follow You. I believe that You died for my sins and rose again, and I accept You as my Savior and King. Come into my life, Lord Jesus, give me new life, and help me to follow and obey You from this day forward. Amen."

If you just prayed that prayer, and invited Jesus to save you, would you raise your hand so that I can pray for you?